

EXPLORING SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES IN SYNTACTIC VARIATION: DUTCH *KOMEN* ‘COME’ WITH A PAST PARTICIPLE OR AN INFINITIVE

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1 Introduction

Dutch presents an intriguing case of syntactic variation, in which the verb *komen* ‘come’ combines either with a past participle, or with an infinitive, as illustrated in (1) (from Haeseryn et al. 1997: 964):

- (1) *En daarvoor komt hij nou viermaal in de week naar Nijmegen gereden/rijden!*
and for-that comes he now four-times in the week to Nijmegen driven/drive
‘And for that he comes driving up to Nijmegen every week!’

Both variants describe a single motion event, of which *komen* and the other verb specify different, yet simultaneous aspects: *komen* conveys the subject’s motion towards a contextually-construable vantage-point, and the past participle or the infinitive describes *how* the subject moves.

It seems safe to assume that both variants are available to many speakers of Dutch. Haeseryn et al. (1997) state that speakers are in principle free to use either the past participle or the infinitive, but that there are regional preferences: the infinitive is more frequent in the northern part of the Netherlands, while the past participle is more frequent in the southern part of the Netherlands and in Belgium.¹

¹ Similar observations are reflected in a relevant syntactic map (‘kwam (ge)fietst’, number 606, by H. Hogerheijde, 1978) in the *Kaartenbank* (map bank) of the Meertens Institute (Kruijssen & van der Sijs 2016). It presents judgments that were gathered in the Netherlands for the variants *De agent kwam de straat ingefietst/infietsten* ‘The police officer came cycling into the street’. Judgments that only the variant with the infinitive occurs are found mainly north of the ‘big rivers’ (Rhine and Meuse), and those that only the past participle variant are found mainly south of the rivers. Still, judgements that both types of constructions occur are found across the country too, a little more so in the south.

Some empirical evidence for the idea that these are preferences, rather than strictly delineated regional differences, comes from Cornips (2002), who reports that both variants occur in her corpus of spoken Dutch in Heerlen (Cornips 1994), in the south of the Netherlands.

Since the two variants consist of different forms, i.e. the past participle and the infinitive, we might wonder whether there is a semantic difference between the two. Haeseryn et al. (1997) do not mention such a difference; Cornips (2002) states that she does not see a clear semantic difference between examples of the two variants in her corpus. Ebeling (2006), however, does suggest that “het gewone betekenisverschil” [‘the normal meaning difference’] between the past participle and the infinitive is preserved in these variants with *komen* (2006: 418): in (1), the past participle highlights the subject referent’s arrival, while the infinitive activates the idea of ‘being on his way’ (cf. also Duinhoven 1997: 282, 551).² Honselaar (2010) supports Ebeling’s suggestion by presenting corpus data that illustrate communicative situations in which one variant might be preferred to the other. Likewise, the present study proposes that there is a semantic difference between the two variants found with *komen*, which can be linked to the different grammatical forms: the past-participle variant highlights the *end* of a process, while the infinitive variant focuses on an *internal portion* of the process.³

Section 2 briefly sketches the grammatical and historical context of the present-day variation. Section 3 focuses on the semantics of the two variants. The semantic difference proposed there is illustrated by means of two small-scale corpus studies. Section 4 explores the variation of *komen* with *aangerend/aanrennen* [literally: ‘towards-run’] ‘approach while running’ in *de Volkskrant*, one of the Dutch national newspapers. Section 5 discusses examples of *komen* and *uit het ei gekropen/kruipen* ‘crept/creep out of the egg’ or ‘hatched/hatch’, collected from the internet by means

² Duinhoven (1997: 282) also signals “een klein betekenisverschil” [‘a small difference in meaning’] between the two variants. His observation, though not so precise, seems to correspond to Ebeling’s suggestion: “De infinitief noemt de zich voltrekkende werking, kan daardoor duratief zijn; het voltooid deelwoord vermeldt de werking als een feit” [‘the infinitive designates a process as it unfolds, which can therefore be durative; the past participle presents the process as a fact’] (Duinhoven 1997: 551).

³ I would like to thank Wim Honselaar for drawing my attention to Ebeling’s (2006) observation, as well as to his own work on this topic (Honselaar 2010). The ideas presented here were developed independently, but are very much in accordance with this earlier work.

of Google. Section 6 concludes that the examples discussed provide support for a semantic difference in terms of highlighting different portions of the motion event.

2 Grammatical and historical context of the variation with *komen*

Haeseryn et al. (1997: 964-965) describe three types of cases in present-day Dutch in which *komen* can occur with either the past participle or the infinitive: with motion verbs that occur with a directional phrase, such as *naar Nijmegen rijden* ‘drive to Nijmegen’ in (1) above; with motion verbs that occur with a directional particle, such as *voorbijfietsen* ‘cycle past’ in (2); and with verbs prefixed by *aan-* ‘up (to)’, ‘towards’, which can be manner of motion verbs, such as *aanlopen* in (3), or verbs that convey the subject referent’s type of behavior while coming, such as *aanmopperen* in (4).^{4,5}

- (2) *Iedere morgen komt ze hier voorbijfietsst/voorbijfietsen*
 every morning comes she here past-cycled/past-cycle
 ‘Every morning she comes cycling past here’
- (3) *Van alle kanten kwamen mensen aanggelopen/aanlopen*
 from all directions came people towards-walked/towards-walk
 ‘People came flocking from all directions’
- (4) *Daar komt mijn neef Nurks weer aangemopperd/aanmopperen!*
 there comes my cousin Grumpy again towards-grumbled/towards-grumble
 ‘Here comes my cousin Grumpy grumbling again!’

There is one restriction that Haeseryn et al. (1997) observe on the relatively free choice that speakers have with respect to the infinitive and the past participle. When the construction is in the perfect, like in (5), only the infinitive is possible (cf. also Broekhuis & Corver 2015: 995-996).⁶ *Komen* displays the ‘infinitivus-

⁴ Examples (2)-(6) are from Haeseryn et al. (1997: 964-965, 982).

⁵ It is not easy to translate *aan-* in these cases. Like *komen*, it evokes the idea of a vantage point. *Van Dale* dictionary of Dutch (12th edition, 1995) lists the use of *aan-* in combinations with *komen* separately, stating that *aan-* together with the verb to which it is prefixed means “op de door het grondwoord genoemde wijze naderen” [‘approaching in the manner described by the verb’]. It would be interesting to study the role of *aan-* in the development of these constructions in more detail.

⁶ In addition, Haeseryn et al. (1997: 964) mention some ‘fixed expressions’ that only occur with the infinitive, i.e. *komen opdagen* [literally: ‘come up-show’] ‘show up’) and *komen aandragen/aansjou-*

pro-participio' (IPP) effect here: Dutch verbs that take an infinitive as their complement appear as an infinitive themselves in the present perfect rather than as a past participle (e.g. Haeseryn et al. 1997: 954).

- (5) Ze is hier vanmorgen al twee keer *komen voorbijfietsen*/**voorbijgefietst*
 she is here this-morning already two times come past-cycle/past-cycled
 'She has cycled past twice already this morning'.

Examples such as (1)-(4) should be distinguished from examples such as (6). In (1)-(4), *komen* and the past participle or the infinitive describe *simultaneous* aspects of the motion event: the subject moves towards a contextually-given vantage-point while behaving (moving) in a certain manner. In (6), on the other hand, *komen* and the infinitive represent a *sequence* of events, i.e. 'come and (then) sit'. In such cases, the past participle cannot be used, so they are not considered here.^{7,8}

wen/aanslepen/aanzetten met [literally: 'come toward-carry/lug/drag/put with'], the latter in the figurative sense of 'annoyingly bringing something up in the conversation'. It would be interesting to see to what extent these restrictions are semantically motivated (cf. Honselaar 2010: 320 for a suggestion along this line).

⁷ Nor are examples such as (i), which also receives a 'sequential' interpretation: 'come and then sit'. The bare infinitive in (6) conveys that Paula chooses to come and sit there herself, while the infinitive with *te* 'to' in (i) expresses that she ends sitting there because of circumstances beyond her control, for example, the seating arrangement.

- (i) *Aan het diner kwam Paula naast mij te zitten*
 at the dinner came Paula next-to me to sit
 'At dinner, Paula came to sit/to be seated next to me'

⁸ Interestingly, Haeseryn et al. (1997: 982) also provide (ii) and (iii), in which the infinitives *vliegen* 'fly' and *lopen* 'walk' describe "op welke manier het 'komen' plaatsvindt" ['the manner of 'coming'] (1997: 982), like in (1)-(4). Yet, they do not require the addition of a directional particle or phrase, nor are they said to display the variation with the past participle. While they are not considered any further here, they do merit further investigation. Since they appear to focus on the choice of mode of transportation, it could well be that the past participle is a less suitable form, that is, if the ideas about its semantic contribution (focus on a final state) are on the right track. Note, finally, that (iii) is a present perfect construction, for which we would expect an infinitive after *komen* anyway, see also (5).

- (ii) *Ik ga meestal met de trein, maar Henk komt altijd vliegen.*
 I go usually with the train but Henk comes always fly
 'I usually go by train, but Henk always comes by plane (comes flying)'
- (iii) *Sabine is helemaal komen lopen*
 Sabine is all-the-way come walk
 'Sabine has walked all this way'

- (6) *Aan het diner kwam Paula naast mij zitten.*
 at the dinner came Paula next-to me sit
 ‘At dinner, Paula came and sat next to me.’

For the historical development of the variants in (1)-(4), van der Horst (2008: 910) suggests the following. The older variant of the two is the one with the past participle: already in the 13th century, *komen* frequently occurred with a past participle, which was interpreted as the manner of the motion. Combinations of *komen* with an infinitive also occurred, but received a sequential interpretation (‘come and V’), like in (6). In the 15th century, *komen* + infinitive also acquired the ‘manner’ interpretation and became more frequent, at the expense of the past participle variant.

Interestingly, van der Horst suggests that because of the opposition infinitive versus past participle, the construction with the past participle soon developed a more perfective interpretation than the one with the infinitive, “door de betekenis van het volt.dw. als zodanig” [‘because of the meaning of the past participle as such’] (2008: 910). He does not, however, specify what ‘more perfective’ means in any further detail. Van der Horst does state that an effect of this increased perfectivity was that the past-participle variant started to combine with a directional phrase more often, which became required from the 18th century onwards (cf. the examples in (1)-(4)).⁹

Van der Horst (2008: 1783) concludes by saying that the construction with the past participle, though considerably decreased in frequency, has not completely disappeared: it is still possible to a certain extent in the present day. Vogel (2005) claims that the past participle variant in Dutch has been almost completely replaced by the infinitive. Duinhoven (1997) considers the variant with the past participle to be under pressure (1997: 286). The corpus data presented in sections 4 and 5 below seem to suggest, however, that *komen* with the past participle still has a comfortable position in the language system.

3 A subtle semantic difference

Similar types of constructions to those studied here occur in other Germanic lan-

⁹ Van der Horst does not discuss the use of directional phrases with the infinitive variant.

guages. As far as I am aware, however, they do not show the variation found in Dutch, nor do they require a directional particle or phrase. English *come* combines with a present participle to describe simultaneous ‘coming’ and manner of motion (e.g. Malá 2015), as does Danish *komme* (e.g. Fenyvesi-Jobbágy 2003). In German, *kommen* combines with a past participle; this construction has been studied particularly extensively (e.g. Hirao 1965, Vogel 2005, Rothstein 2011).

Vogel’s (2005) characterization of the German construction provides an insightful starting point for exploring the semantic difference between the two variants in Dutch:

die Kombination *kommen* + Partizip Perfekt im Deutschen [repräsentiert] primär ein regelhaftes analytisches Mittel zum Ausdruck von räumlicher Determiniertheit [...], d. h. die Bewegung erfolgt in eine Richtung, z. B. *sie kommt gerannt, geflogen, gefahren, gekrabbelt, gestolpert* usw. (Vogel 2005: 61-62)

(the combination *kommen* + past participle in German primarily represents an analytical means to express spatial determinedness, i.e. the motion is unidirectional, e.g. *sie kommt gerannt, geflogen, gefahren, gekrabbelt, gestolpert* ‘she comes running, flying, driving, crawling, stumbling’ etc.)

According to Vogel, the unidirectional motion implies two further characteristics of the construction: goal-orientedness and progressivity (2005: 63). She argues that the goal of the motion is the actual or the imagined location of an observer, which can be the location of the speaker, or the location specified by a directional phrase. At the same time, however, Vogel emphasizes that the focus of the construction is “nicht auf den Endpunkt der Bewegung, sondern auf ihren Verlauf” [‘not on the endpoint of the motion, but on its progression’] (2005: 62). With respect to this progressive aspect of the construction, she refers to Erben (1996):

Auf nichts anderes zielt wahrscheinlich auch Erben (1996: 306) ab, wenn er von der „Phase der Annäherung“ spricht. Allerdings hat sich die Fügung mit *kommen* im Deutschen noch nicht als Progressiv verselbständigt, d. h. sie ist im Prinzip nur mit Bewegungsverben möglich. (Vogel 2005: 61-62)

(This is probably exactly what Erben (1996: 306) means when he speaks of the ‘phase of approaching’. In any case, the German construction with *kommen* cannot fully function as a progressive yet: it is, in principle, only possible with verbs of motion.)

The semantics of the *kommen* construction is thus highly complex, involving unidirectional motion, manner, path, goal, deixis, and progressive aspect.

I propose that Vogel's characterization of the German construction can be extended to Dutch *komen* with a past participle or an infinitive in the following way. Either variant in Dutch describes a progressive, unidirectional motion event. The motion event is oriented towards a goal which coincides with a contextually-construable vantage-point. While this goal marks the point of completion of the motion event, the construction with *komen* focuses on the event as it unfolds.

This semantic description is in accordance with Honselaar's (2010: 321) observation that *komen* in these constructions describes "motion towards a certain point (the deictic center)", with the manner of motion being specified by the past participle or the infinitive. Interestingly, Honselaar states that *komen* does not convey "the successful completion of the motion, in the sense that the intended endpoint is reached" (2010: 321), which might well account for the progressive character of the constructions. Inspired by Ebeling (2006), Honselaar describes the semantic difference between the two variants as follows: the past participle highlights the 'endpoint' of the motion, while the infinitive highlights the 'route' (2010: 321).

In cognitive-grammar terms (see e.g. Langacker 2008), we can say that the two variants in Dutch offer subtly different 'construals' of the motion event: they differ in the way these events are conceptualized. At the highest level of semantic composition, where *komen* combines with the manner of motion verb + the directional phrase (or particle), either variant designates a deictic motion event that is unfolding. The difference between the two variants, however, arises at a lower level of the organization, where the past participle or the infinitive combines with the directional phrase. In accordance with Ebeling (2006) and Honselaar (2010), I assume that a past participle highlights the final or resultant state of an event (cf. also Langacker 2008: 120-122, Coussé 2011), while an infinitive does not afford special prominence to any of the states that together constitute the event. The conceptualization of the motion event described by the past participle variant with *komen* thus explicitly includes this final state, yet it is presented as unfolding; the conceptualization of the motion event described by the infinitive

variant is also presented as unfolding, but without the explicit inclusion of the final state.

This difference is extremely subtle (cf. also Honselaar 2010: 321), so it will often be possible to describe a certain motion event with either variant. In the remainder, however, two small-scale corpus studies are presented that provide evidence for the semantic difference proposed here: the choice of a particular variant can be seen to be motivated by the semantic difference proposed here.

4 *Komen* with *aangerend* or *aanrennen*

In the first corpus study, the archive of the Dutch national newspaper *de Volkskrant* (<http://www.volkskrant.nl/archief>) was searched for the words *aangerend* and *aanrennen* [literally: ‘toward-run’] ‘approached/approach while running’. For the period 01/01/2014-15/05/2016, this produced 10 hits for *aangerend*, and 28 hits for *aanrennen*. Table 1 shows the number of hits that actually involved the variants with *komen* studied here: there were 7 examples with the past participle *aangerend*, and 11 with the infinitive *aanrennen*.

Table 1. Instances of *komen* with *aangerend* and *aanrennen* in *de Volkskrant*

	<i>aangerend</i>	<i>aanrennen</i>
<i>komt</i> ‘comes’	0	5
<i>komen</i> ‘come’ [present plural]	1	2
<i>kwam</i> ‘came’ [singular]	5	4
<i>kwamen</i> ‘came’ [plural]	1	0
Total	7	11

Based on this extremely small study, we can conclude that the readers of *de Volkskrant* are exposed to both variants with *komen*. In addition, we might wonder about the current status of the past participle variant: its use might be more widespread than has been suggested by, for example, Duinhoven (1997), Vogel (2005) and van der Horst (2008) (cf. the end of section 2).

Examining the individual examples more closely, we can observe that there is a sense of completion in the past participle variants that is absent in the infinitive

cases. In (7), for instance, the past participle *aangerend* is used in a context in which the subject referents, two young women traveling through South America, actually arrive at their destination, the airport. The infinitive *aanrennen* in (8), on the other hand, is used in a context in which the subject referent does not reach his destination, the tram: he fails to catch it.

- (7) *Hé maar El, het is handig als we er een uur van tevoren zijn. Ja, doen we.*
 hey but El it is wise if we there an hour in advance are yes do we
Vervolgens kwamen we vijf minuten voor tijd aangerend.
 then came we five minutes before time toward-run
*Waarom? Omdat niets loopt zoals je hebt gepland. (01/02/2014)*¹⁰
 why because nothing goes as you have planned
 ‘Hey, El, it would be a good idea to be there one hour in advance. Yes, let’s do that. And then we arrived (came running there) only five minutes beforehand. Why? Because nothing ever goes according to plan.’
- (8) *Het gaf me een vergelijkbaar gevoel als bij de tramchauffeur in Amsterdam,*
 it gave me a comparable feeling as with the tramdriver in Amsterdam
die zag dat ik kwam aanrennen
 who saw that I came running
en een tel voordat ik mijn voet op de treeplank kon zetten
 and a second before I my foot on the footboard could put
de deur sloot, vrolijk klingelde en wegreed. (25/06/2014)
 the door closed merrily jingled and off-rode
 ‘It reminded me of this tramdriver in Amsterdam, who saw that I came running, and one second before I could put my foot on the footboard, closed the door, merrily rang his bell, and drove off.’

That the final state is in focus with the past participle but not with the infinitive is also supported by the following observation. The past participle variants in the examples in *de Volkskrant* are often followed by a description of what happens next, while the infinitive variant is often followed by a description of what is happening

¹⁰ Examples (7)-(12) are from the archive of *de Volkskrant* (<http://www.volkskrant.nl/archief>); they are provided here with their publication date.

at the same time. In the past participle variant in (9), for example, Kwadwo Asamoah first runs towards Thomas Müller and then tackles him. In (10), however, the infinitive evokes a scenario in which skinheads come running towards a group of protesters, during which time the police officers (*wij* ‘we’) intervene.

- (9) *Thomas Müller [...] leek [...] doelman Fatau Dauda te gaan passeren.*
 Thomas Müller seemed goalkeeper Fatau Dauda to go pass
Een tweede zege kondigde zich aan.
 a second win announced itself
Toen kwam Kwadwo Asamoah aangerend
 then came Kwadwo Asamoah toward-run
om met een uiterste tackle de 3-2 te voorkomen. (21/06/2014)
 to with an ultimate tackle the 3-2 to prevent
 ‘It seemed as though Thomas Müller was going to dribble past goalkeeper Fatau Dauda. A second win seemed near. Then Kwadwo Asamoah came running (towards him) and prevented the 3-2 lead with an ultimate tackle.
- (10) *Wij moeten zorgen dat het niet uit de hand loopt.*
 We have-to take-care that it not out-of the hand goes
Als er straks dertig skinheads komen aanrennen,
 If there in-a-moment thirty skinheads come toward-run
springen wij ertussen. (22/09/2014)
 we jump there-between
 ‘It is our job to prevent things from getting out of hand. If thirty skinheads come running (up to them) in a moment, we will jump in between them.’

A similar difference is found when the *komen* construction is followed by a description of another event that is connected by means of *en* ‘and’, like in (11) and (12). Note that the conjunction *en* itself does not specify whether the two events are sequential or simultaneous. It seems to me, however, that the past participle variant in (11) evokes a sequential reading, while the variant with the infinitive in (12) evokes a simultaneous reading. The boys in (11) run towards the car and then pull out their cell phones to take a picture of the car; the man in (12) is waving as he comes running towards the contextually-construable vantage point.

- (11) *zodra de auto parkeert, stoppen mannen met het fotograferen van de omgeving*
 as-soon-as the car parks, stop men with the taking-pictures of the surrounding
en richten hun camera op mij.
 and point their camera at me
Jongetjes komen aangerend en trekken hun mobieltje,
 boys come toward-run and pull their cell-phone
gevolgd door een langgerekt wow als de vleugel deur openzwaait
 followed by an extended wow as the wing-door open-swings
en ik me uit de cabine wurm. (14/06/2014)
 and I myself out-of the cabin squeeze
 ‘As soon as the car is parked, men stop taking pictures of the surroundings
 and point their cameras at me. Boys come running (towards me) and pull
 out their cell phones, which is followed by an extended ‘wow’ as the wing
 door swings open and I squeeze out of the cabin.’
- (12) *Vrijwel meteen doemt Stok weer op.*
 almost immediately appears Stok again
Hij komt aanrennen en zwaait met iets in zijn hand.
 he comes toward-run and waves with something in his hand
Volgens agent NN1 is het 'een lange stok met aan het eind iets van ijzer'.
 according-to officer NN1 is it a long stick with at the end something of iron
Later blijkt het een wandelstok met een groot handvat. (23/07/2015)
 Later turns-out it a walking-stick with a large handle.
 ‘Stok reappears almost immediately. He comes running (towards ...) and is
 waving with something in his hand. According to officer NN1, it is ‘a long
 stick with something of iron at the end’. Later it turned out to be a walking
 stick with a large handle.’

In sum, then, the past participle variants evoke the image of the event being completed and are therefore eminently suitable to describe a sequence of events. The infinitive variants, on the other hand, focus more on an internal portion of the event; as such, this variant can serve as the background for some other event happening at the same time.

5 Komen with *uit het ei gekropen* or *uit het ei kruipen*

A final argument for the semantic difference between the two variants is based on examples such as (13) and (14), with *uit het ei gekropen/kruipen* ‘hatched/hatch’, or ‘crept/creep out of the egg’. Note that the motion events that they describe involve only a very short path: the subject referent needs to move only from inside the egg to outside of it for the event to be completed.

- (13) *Na lang wachten werden toch de eerste barsten in de eieren zichtbaar*
 after long waiting became still the first cracks in the eggs visible
*en kwamen de kuikentjes uit het ei gekropen.*¹¹
 and came the chicks out-of the egg crept
 ‘After a long period of waiting, the first cracks finally became visible in the eggs and the chicks crept out of the eggs’.
- (14) *Vandaag kwam het kuiken uit het ei kruipen.*¹²
 today came the chick out-of the egg creep
 ‘Today, the chick crept out of the egg’

In this respect, they differ from the examples with *aangerend/aanrennen* in section 4, which involved much longer paths. Similarly, the paths in (13)-(14) are also considerably shorter than those in (15) and (16). *De straat inrijden* ‘drive into the street’ (cf. Beliën 2008, Ch. 6) describes a motion event in which the subject referent drives from where it is not in the street (i.e. minimally at the boundary at one end) to where it is completely in the street (i.e. no longer supported by anything else but the street). As long as the subject referent is not considered to be moving out of the street, the path can continue further into the street and still be considered part of the motion event described by *de straat inrijden*.

- (15) *Een Russische tank kwam de straat ingereden.*¹³
 a Russian tank came the street in-driven
 ‘A Russian tank came driving into the street’

¹¹ [Http://www.sbo-evenaar.nl/nieuws.html](http://www.sbo-evenaar.nl/nieuws.html), accessed April 29, 2016.

¹² [Http://kippenforum.nl/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=71048](http://kippenforum.nl/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=71048), accessed April 29, 2016.

¹³ [Http://www.getuigen.be/Getuigenis/3den/Put-Jean/Print/Geeraerts.htm](http://www.getuigen.be/Getuigenis/3den/Put-Jean/Print/Geeraerts.htm), accessed March 31, 2016.

(16) *Een mooie grote oude schoolbus kwam de straat inrijden.*¹⁴

a beautiful big old school-bus came the street in-drive

‘A beautiful big old school bus came driving into the street’

With the short, almost instantaneous path involved in *uit het ei kruipen* ‘creep out of the egg/hatch’, it might well be that when this phrase is combined with *komen* ‘come’, the past participle variant is a natural choice. That is, if the past participle variant indeed highlights the final state of the motion event, language users might prefer it in this case: the path is extremely short, so the final state is easily included. With *de straat inrijden* ‘drive into the street’, we could argue, language users have more of a choice: the path of the motion event is much longer, which makes it suitable for either perspective, i.e. one that explicitly includes the final state, or one that does not.

As shown in Table 2, the past participle variant is indeed much more frequent with *uit het ei kruipen* than the infinitive variant: over 90% of the unique examples that were found featured the past participle *gekropen* ‘crept’. The table presents the results of 16 Google searches (conducted on April 29, 2016): 4 different forms of the verb *komen* were each combined with the two phrases mentioned, either directly, or with one or more words intervening (by means of the asterisk). Repeated examples were removed, as were examples that did not contain the relevant *komen* construction.

Table 2. Unique examples of *komen* and *uit het ei gekropen/kruipen*

	(*) <i>uit het ei gekropen</i> ”	(*) <i>uit het ei kruipen</i> ”
“ <i>komt</i>	21	4
“ <i>komen</i>	22	3
“ <i>kwam</i>	27	1
“ <i>kwamen</i>	14	0
Total	84	8

¹⁴ <http://ingeborgvanbruggen.nl/portfolio/bruiloftsportfolio/fotografie-bruiloft-delft/>, accessed March 31, 2016.

In contrast, the infinitive was chosen more often in the case of *de straat inrijden* ‘drive into the street’, as shown in Table 3: the past participle was used in only around a third of the unique cases. This table presents the result of 16 searches by means of Google (conducted on March 31, 2016): four forms of *komen* were combined with **straat ingereden*, **straat in gereden*, **straat inrijden*, and **straat in rijden*.¹⁵

Table 3. Unique examples of *komen* and *straat ingereden/inrijden*

	<i>gereden</i> ”	<i>rijden</i> ”
“ <i>komt</i> * <i>straat in</i> (-)	23	33
“ <i>komen</i> * <i>straat in</i> (-)	4	15
“ <i>kwam</i> * <i>straat in</i> (-)	37	71
“ <i>kwamen</i> * <i>straat in</i> (-)	18	29
Total	82	148

The overwhelming choice for the past participle variant *uit het ei gekropen* ‘hatched/crept out of the egg’ can thus be considered another argument for a semantic analysis of this variant that involves a focus on the final state of the motion event. In addition, note that the numbers presented in this section seem to suggest that the past participle variant might well be still very much alive in present-day Dutch.

6 Conclusion

This study has provided evidence for a semantic difference between two syntactic variants with *komen*. While both variants describe an unfolding, unidirectional motion event towards a contextually construable vantage point, the variant with the past participle highlights the *end* of a process, while the infinitive variant does not. As such, the semantic difference is a matter of perspective: the language user can choose one variant over the other to highlight a different portion of the event. As we have seen, some contexts appear to be more favorable to one perspective than

¹⁵ The asterisk was used instead of the article *de* ‘the’ so as to widen the search. Both *in* written separately and together with the verb were included because of the spelling variation that language users display in this area (cf. also Cappelle 2013).

the other. If the path of motion is extremely short, for example, the past participle variant may well be preferred. Conversely, the infinitive variant seems to be highly suitable to describe a motion event that, as it unfolds, provides the background for another event that happens at the same time.

Despite their narrow scope, the two corpus studies presented here made it possible to study the use of the two variants in their wider contexts. This not only provided insight into the semantics involved, but the findings also raised questions about the status of the two variants in the present language system. While the past participle variant is generally considered to be on its way out, the data presented here suggest that it still plays a vital role in present-day Dutch. The syntactic variation with *komen* therefore provides an interesting case for studying the interplay of semantic and regional factors in language change.

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